

## **SCHWEITZER COURTS CANADIAN ENERGY COMPANIES**

*By Karl Puckett*

Gov. Brian Schweitzer on Tuesday finished up a two-day "marketing mission" to Alberta where he encouraged top Canadian energy companies to invest in Montana.

"I've pitched the idea of doing business in Montana," the governor said in a telephone interview after the final meeting in Calgary.

The trip, which has been planned for more than a year, came at a great time for the governor's purposes.

Alberta energy companies are displeased with the provincial government over \$1.4 billion in recent royalty increases.

"I'm up here saying, 'If you're not happy with the policies of Alberta, I'm sure you're going to like the business-friendly attitude of Montana,'" Schweitzer said.

He met with a range of officials from "world-class" energy companies as well as Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach during the trip to Edmonton and Calgary.

He also spoke before the Calgary Chamber of Commerce, where he made a speech on cross-border investment.

Schweitzer and Stelmach signed a memorandum of understanding creating the Montana-Alberta Bilateral Action Committee, said Tom Olsen, a spokesman for the premier. The committee will work on common issues and points of contention between the two governments, he said.

Olsen said the provincial government took no offense at the governor's attempt to generate business in Alberta, saying he came to the right place if he wanted to witness successful energy development.

"If he's looking for some tips, maybe he can find them," Olsen said.

Schweitzer's final meeting on Tuesday was with Connacher Oil and Gas Limited, a Calgary-based oil and natural gas exploration, development and production company, which owns the oil refinery in Great Falls.

"We talked about their potential expansion in Great Falls," Schweitzer said. The governor said he had no details of the expansion but described the plans as "exciting."

Officials with Enbridge, which operates the world's longest crude oil and liquids pipelining system, told Schweitzer of plans to upgrade a pipeline that will allow another 30,000 barrels of oil to be developed in the Sidney area in Eastern Montana.

The governor also met with officials with TransCanada, which is building a transmission line between southcentral Montana and Las Vegas.

"These are world-class energy companies that have made a lot of money in Alberta," the governor said. Schweitzer added that he offered them strategies for investing in Montana and explained the state's favorable tax code and permitting process.

The governor said he made the trip because Alberta has shown the greatest advancement in energy development in the world during the last 15 years and he wants those businesses, particularly those involving wind and clean-coal technologies and oil and gas development and oil refineries to consider projects in Montana.